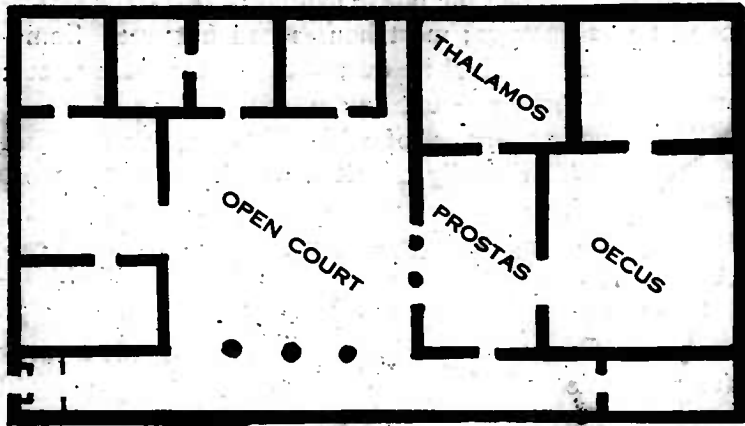


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The Newark Museum Association

Newark, N. J.

## Habitations of Man



### Floor Plan of a Model of a Greek House

The scale of the floor plan to the model is 1 inch to 10 inches.

The scale of the floor plan to the house at Priene is 1 inch to 22½ feet.

This leaflet describes a model of the restoration of a Greek house in the ancient city of Priene, near Smyrna on the west coast of Asia Minor. The house dates from about 300 B. C. and was excavated in 1895 by German archæologists.

The model is 34" x 24" and is made of wood. The scale is 1:27. It was built by Friedrich Rausch of Nordhausen, Germany.

## A Greek House

To Vitruvius, who lived in Rome about 50, B. C., we owe much of our information about the private house of the Greeks.

He tells us that it was usually divided into two sections, the *Andronitis*, apartments for men, and the *Gynæconitis*, for women. When the house had two stories, the *Gynæconitis* was upstairs; most houses had but one. Sometimes each section had its own entrance from the street; more often there was but one entrance.

The house at Priene, of which the Newark Museum has a model, originally adjoined the house next door, forming the two sections mentioned by Vitruvius. This half was then occupied by a poor man who did not need the entire house for his small household.

It dates from about 300 B. C. and was excavated in 1895-8 by German archæologists, who have made a careful restoration of it.

The outside walls of all Greek houses were plain in appearance and seldom broken by windows. The inside rooms were lighted by the doors opening into the court. The foundations were of stone, usually of large size; those of the house at Priene were about twenty-five inches long. The walls were of wood, sometimes filled in with sun-dried bricks. The roofs were flat and made of unbaked brick.

The home of the ordinary man was entered by a small door in a bare wall. The door opened inward, for Hippias, about 514 B. C., laid a tax on outward swinging doors because of the space they stole from the already narrow street. Close to the door inside was the room of the porter, who usually kept a dog; hence the floor inscription in some Greek houses, and later on in Roman ones, "*Cave canem*," "*Beware of the Dog*."

A long passage led to an open court. In it was usually

an altar for sacrificing to the household god. Around this open court and opening into it were rooms—dining and storerooms, bedchambers and libraries. Each house had at least one hall large enough for invited dinner guests and their couches, musicians, waiters and the many appointments of elaborate banquets.

In the house in Priene this large hall was the oecus or dining-room. The prostas, or room which stood before the oecus, was apparently used as a kitchen, for remains of vessels and an old hearth were found there. The floor was of marble. In the small room next to the oecus the pipes of a complete drainage system have been unearthed.

Adjoining the prostas was the thalamos or bedroom of the owner. Fragments of stucco decoration were found on the walls of this room and in other rooms traces of color.

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Greek furniture was simple but in good taste. There were chairs, beds and couches, often of bronze and of beautiful pattern, adjustable tripods for tables, chests for clothing, sundials and water clocks, earthenware for many purposes and kitchen utensils.

The house life of the Greeks was as simple as their houses. In Athens during the classical period early rising was the rule, for artisans began their work shortly after sunrise and schools opened early. The morning toilet was not a matter of much moment; a slave poured water over the master and he used some substitute for soap, as fuller's earth; the common people went to the public wells to wash. Breakfast was a scanty meal, usually wine and bread. Persons of the leisure class spent the morning visiting friends or at the barber's, where hair and beard were trimmed and nails cleaned. The barber shops were much visited by people who wished to hear the news.

About noon people gathered at the market-place where most of the business of the city was transacted. Here were the bankers and money changers, artisans and dealers. Here the men of the family, attended by slaves, did the buying for the household.

After a light lunch the early afternoon was passed in various ways, such as reading, writing or visiting houses devoted to dice-throwing. In the late afternoon a warm bath was taken in preparation for dinner. Greek baths were not as large or luxurious as the famous ones of the Romans. Cold baths were preferred, followed by a rub-down with oil, after which the bathers congregated in common resting rooms for talking, singing and throwing dice.

The evening meal at home was usually simple and soon over. If guests were present it was prolonged far into the night with drinking and animated talk. At family meals the men reclined upon couches while eating, with the women at their feet. The children sat on chairs about the table. When guests were invited, women seldom appeared at the meal. Forks and knives were used for cutting food in the kitchen only. The diners used spoons, pieces of bread hollowed out and their fingers. Table cloths and napkins were unknown; towels and water for washing were handed about after the meal.

The Greeks during this period spent the most of their money on their temples and public buildings, and left their homes, both inside and out, simple and almost bare of decoration. The walls were sometimes colored; but fresco and stucco work were not used until later times. The floors were of stone, laid sometimes in simple patterns. There was little furniture and that of a severe design. There were often draperies on the couches and hangings sometimes took the place of doors.